

Message Text

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (DOWN GRADING INSTRUCTIONS)

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: ELAB, JA

SUBJECT: OKINAWA TWA STAFF REQUEST FOR EMPLOYMENT WITH PAA

REF: TOYKO 2117

DEPT PASS TO CAB

SUMMARY: JAPANESE LABOR UNION DELEGATION APPROACHED EMBASSY, REQUESTING USG HELP IN ARRANGING TRANSFER OF 26 TWO EMPLOYEES ON OKINAWA TO PAA (REFTEL). THEY INDICATED THAT, IF NECESSARY THEY WOULD PRESS CASE THRU JAPANESE LABOR RELATIONS COMMISSION AND COURTS, ASK GOJ DISAPPROVE ROUTE SWAP, PICKET PAA ON OKINAWA, AND POSSIBLY STRIKE THE AIRLINES ELSEWHERE IN JAPAN. EMBASSY PASSED THIS INFO TO PAA'S JAPAN HEAD, MCDONALD. HE REPLIED HIS FIRM PLANS TO NEW HIRES ON OKINAWA, CONTRACTING SOME SUPPORT SERVICED WITH JAL, AND TRANSFERRING IN TWO AMERICANS, AND HE EXPECTS TWO JAPANESE EMPLOYEES FROM MAINLAND JAPAN. HE ALSO INDICATED ROUTE SWAP IS STRICTLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH EXISITING AGREEMENT, SO HE ANTICIPATES NO TROUBLE WITH GOJ. END SUMMARY.

1. EMBASSY CONFERENCE WITH DELEGATION OF JAPANESE REPRESENTING TWO EMPLOYEES' ASSN, OKINAWA AND MINKOROREN (JAPAN FED OF CIVIL AVIATIONS WORKERS' UNIONS) REPORTED IN REFTEL ARRANGED AT
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REQUEST OF GOJ MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. BASIC POINTS

PRESENTED TO LABATT BY DELEGATION INCLUDED: (A) 26 JAPANESE TWA EMPLOYEES DESIRE TO TRANSFER AS NEW HIRES TO PAA; (B) WHILE PAA HAD SAID ITS PLANS FOR OKINAWA WERE NOT FIRM, UNION HAD HEARD RUMORS PAA WOULD CONTRACT OUT MUCH OF WORK THAT TWO DIRECT-HIRE WORKERS HAD PERFORMED--LOADING, UNLOADING, AND SERVICING AIRCRAFT; (C) FIRING EMPLOYEES, WHILE NOT, REPEAT NOT, PROHIBITED BY LAW IS VERY DIFFICULT TO DO IN JAPAN. PRACTICALLY SPEAKING, IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, JAPANESE CONCEPT OF LIFETIME EMPLOYMENT ENJOYS LEGAL SANCTION. (COMMENT: THEIR CONTENTION HAS SOME VALIDITY. CHASE MANHATTAN IN 1966 REDUCED IN FORCE 25 WORKERS. THIS RESULTED IN SUCH STRONG UNION PRESSURE, BOTH DIRECT--PICKETING, ETC--AND THRU GOJ THAT IN 1973 THE COMPANY CAPITULATED EITHER MAKING CASH SETTLEMENTS OR REHIRING DISCHARGED WORKERS. FIRM ESTIMATES DISPUTE COST THEM ONE MILLION DOLLARS). TWO EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE CONTENDED THAT IN JAPANESE PATTERN PAA IS CONSIDERED OBLIGATED TO PICK UP TWO'S WORKERS ALONG WITH TWO'S ROUTE. OTHERWISE, EMPLOYEES ASSN WITH MINKOROREN SUPPORT WILL: (1) APPEAL TO JAPANESE LABOR RELATIONS COMMISSION AND/OR TO THE COURTS; (2) SEEK GOJ HELP TO BLOCK THE ROUTE SWAP, (3) PICKET PAA OPERATIONS OF NAHA AIRPORT, AND (4) POSSIBLY INSTIGATE MINKOROREN-SPONSORED WORK STOPPAGES AGAINST PAA ELSEWHERE IN JAPAN. (THE DELEGATION DID NOT INDICATE IT WOULD CONTACT CAB DIRECTLY, PROBABLY BECAUSE THEY CONSIDERED THAT TAKING THEIR CASE TO THE EMBASSY, AND DELIVERING UNION'S LETTERS, REPRESENTED OFFICIAL PETITION TO USG FOR RELIEF.

2. LABATT MET MALCOLM MCDONALD, PAA HEAD IN JAPAN FEB 20, DELIVERING COPIES OF UNION'S LETTERS AND OUTLINING WHAT DELEGATION SAID IN FEB 14 MEETING. LABATT POINTED OUT THAT PROBLEM APPEARED TO HAVE MAKINGS OF LONG-TERM LABOR DISPUTE. PAA MIGHT FIND THAT ADVERSE PUBLICITY AND POSSIBILITY OF GOJ ACTION SUPPORTING WORKERS COULD OUTWEIGH COST OF HIRING THE TWO STAFF.

3. MR. MCDONALD MADE FOLLOWING POINTS: (A) PAA POLICY IS TO CONTRACT FOR SERVICES--SUCH AS LOADING, UNLOADING, AND SERVICING AIRCRAFT--AT AIRPORTS--AT AIRPORTS WHERE THE FIRM HAD ONE FLIGHT A DAY OR LESS. SINCE PAA DID NOT PLAN MORE TRAFFIC THAN THAT ON OKINAWA, IT HAD ALREADY BEGUN THAT NEGOTIATIONS WITH CONFIDENTIAL

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JAPAN AIRLINES TO CONTRACT OUT THE WORK TO THEM. (B) THE ROUTE SWAP AGREEMENT DID NOT INCLUDE PROTECTION AGAINST DISCHARGE OF WORKERS, AMERICAN OR FOREIGN, EMPLOYED BY EITHER AIRLINE. (C) PAA ALREADY EMPLOYED FOUR JAPANESE ON OKINAWA. IT PLANNED TO AUGMENT THAT STAFF BY BRINGING IN TWO US CITIZENS AND TRANSFERRING TWO OF ITS JAPANESE FROM MAINLAND JAPAN, IF IT COULD FIND QUALIFIED PEOPLE WILLING TO MAKE THE MOVE. WITH THE VERY REAL POSSIBILITY THAT THE FIRM WOULD HAVE SOON TO REDUCE

ITS JAPANESE WORK FORCE, THE TRANSFER OF PRESENT PAA EMPLOYEES TO OKINAWA RATHER THAN HIRING NEW WORKERS, WAS MUCH MORE APPROPRIATE. (D) PAA DID NOT FEEL THERE WAS ANY WAY THE GOJ COULD PRESSURE IT TO ACCEPT TWO'S WORKERS. THE ROUTE SWAP WAS STRICTLY WITHIN TERMS OF EXISTING AGREEMENTS.

4. EMBASSY NOT PRIVY TO LABOR TERMS (IF ANY) OF A ROUTE SWAP AGREEMENT

NOR
EXTENT OF CAB INTEREST AND AUTHORITY OVER SUCH LABOR MATTERS. EMBASSY POSITION IS NOT, REPEAT NOT, TO INSERT ITSELF INTO SUCH LABOR DISPUTES OF US FIRMS IN JAPAN. WE ASSUME IN THIS CASE ANY ACTION CAB MAY INITIATE WILL BE DIRECTLY WITH THE AIRLINES CONCERNED.
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